2: Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

As might be expected, cotton and silk production is the peculiar pride of Turkistan. The Farghana Valley, we know, has the ideal climate and the water both for cotton cultivation, and for the growth of mulberry-trees[1] for the silk-worm. The same is true of the other southern oases, watered by the Chirchik (Tashkent), Zarafshan and Kashka Darya, and also of the Vakhsh river irrigation in Tajikistan. In the early years cotton cultivation was in danger of becoming a monoculture, and more than once brought the country into terrible famine conditions. The figures of the fourth Five-Year Plan, if reliable, suggest that, even in Uzbekistan, there has now been a considerable reversion from commercial cropping to grain, and, if so, the rural economy is not so brittle as many have supposed. The great Soviet achievement has been to bring the mills into Turkistan and process the crops locally. The largest cotton-processing establishment is the Stalin Textile Combine and Institute at Tashkent, while for silk there is a combine at Margilan, said to be the largest in the world, and integrating all processes from the unwinding of the cocoon to the weaving of the final material. Woven silk is in great demand for parachutes.

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IRRIGATION

The aim to free Russia from all dependence on foreign cotton and then to build heavy stock-piles is bound up with the Soviet policy of irrigation. Irrigation in its turn is linked both with waterways and (more important) with the production of hydro-electric power. In some respects, on the face of them, the Soviet plans for development under these heads are more imaginative even than the metallurgical projects realized in the Urals before the War. For the claim is that they will turn a great desert into a smiling countryside, and even divert waters destined by nature for the Arctic into the Turanian basin. But the science of the irrigation engineer

[1] *Morus alba*, known locally by the Persian word *tut*.